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vomited human flesh.[1] They said that they had a strong headman and that they could trust him; he was a good headman without witchcraft. If he had been a sorcerer they would have kept scolding him until the next morning.

About two hours after sunrise the people gathered and started dancing. At about this time Cimombo was brought out of the hut and put in the grass shed which had been built for the occasion. This was the climax of the ceremony.[2] He sat on a chair in the grass shed with one of his two wives on either side. Makoka then started a chant, exhorting the visitors to come to throw pennies at Cimombo's feet. Some of the people there made speeches about the type of behaviour they would expect from him. Then Nyambi arrived from the court village in a ricksha. When the noise had subsided he told the people that if they disobeyed Cimombo it meant that they disobeyed the chief. He emphasized the importance of the rank of the new headman. After the speech he presented 12*s.* to Cimombo which was received on his behalf by Ncimbo. Nyambi then left and the ceremony was over, but the people remained to dance and drink beer.

This description of the procedure following the 'coming out of the hut' is somewhat sketchy. The interaction of the headman and his villagers on this formal and ceremonial occasion is of great interest and importance. During the entire ceremony the headman adopts the pose which is appropriate for any Yao initiand. His hands are on his lap or on the arms of the chair and his head is bowed forward with eyes downcast. He neither speaks nor moves. His attendants, when necessary, wipe the sweat off his face or chase away the flies. The other occupants of the mat, who may be his wives, and sometimes his heir, adopt similar postures. In contrast to this, is the behaviour of the villagers who run about shouting wildly, the men discharging muzzle-loading guns, and women ululating in the typical Central African way.

Before the new headman comes out of the hut his mentors

[1] This is a test based on the witchlore of the Yao, who believe that sorcerers kill relatives with magic and then share out the flesh of their victims with fellow-sorcerers in ghoulish feasts.

[2] Called the 'coming out from the hut' (*kukupoka nyumba*). It is of course the first public appearance of the headman in his newly assumed status.

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622 impress on him the difficulty of his position, and when he is taken outside some of this is repeated in public. At Nkacelenga's installation ceremony in December 1946, which I attended, the following incidents took place. Shortly after he was taken out
622 of the hut, Cigunda, one of the officiating headmen, said:
537 'Younger brothers of Nkacelenga, are you happy that Kambiri [1] has an elder brother? You women, have you cooked beer so that you can have your village headman?' In reply the men and women clapped their hands and a few came forward to throw some coppers into a cloth at Nkacelenga's feet. Cigunda went on to say, 'From to-day no woman will be impudent to the chief, because you are all of the same womb. All you men listen, only this man is your village headman!' Cigunda now turned to Nkacelenga who did not change his posture in the least. 'You village headman Nkacelenga, don't listen to what your wife says, because she will fight with your sisters and tell you that they have been cursing you. You should make enquiries when you have heard these things because you are a big man [i.e. important headman]. From to-day onwards you are a big man. Every person will be trying to spoil your name by saying that you are a bad man. You need to be patient and easy-going.' Turning to the public, Cigunda said, 'Even you husbands [*akamwini*] do not listen to what your wives say if they try to traduce the village headman, because some husbands can break the village.' Thereupon one husband got up feeling around for a penny, found he did not have one, and with much ostentation borrowed one from a fellow-husband sitting next to him. He then came forward to where Nkacelenga was sitting and said, 'You say some husbands can break a village. Is that true? But husbands build the villages? They can't break the villages.' Then very deliberately he threw the penny into the cloth at the headman's feet and went back to his seat. His speech was greeted with acclamation from the husbands. Cigunda said nothing after that and the ceremony was over.

In September 1948, during the installation ceremony of Mapata,
622 one of Kawinga's less important headmen in the northern
533 part of his area, the significance of the relationship of the headman to his relatives for the continuation of the village as a whole, was brought out more clearly. After the headman was

[1] A perpetual brother of Nkacelenga.

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brought out of the hut, as always, songs were sung and speeches were made. One of the songs was : 'A tree when it grows, grows with its branches.'[1] This is a reference to the dependence of the village headman upon the increase of his relatives for an increase in his rank. The Yao compare kinship with a tree, the component segments of the maximal lineage (the tree) being the branches. Then one of the officiating headmen mentioned that there were many sisters' sons of the old Mapata but that Kawinga and Chiwalo had selected the one on the chair to be the headman. He then exhorted the others neither to be jealous nor to resort to sorcery, but to exalt the name[2] that it might live long. This was followed by a song which introduced a second theme, 'A husband however rich he becomes here, cannot climb high.'[3] This song emphasizes that the uxorilocal husbands of the village can never achieve rank outside their own matrilineal villages however rich they are. The officiating headman then went on to say that some women rebuke their husbands when they speak subversively, but others side with them against the village headman. He told the husbands and women that they were wrong to do this and that they must desist. After this followed a public rebuke of the village as a whole. One of the younger brothers of the new headman pointed out that when the mother of the previous Mapata had died she had been buried in the graveyard and not in the village. He rebuked the villagers and told them that, when the present chief died, he should be buried in the village. A man who had been charged with neglect by his wife (his cross-cousin) paid the headman the compensation which he had refused to pay to her. One of the headmen then exhorted the villagers to respect their headman; to send someone to accompany him on his journeys to see to his wants; never to allow the headman to carry a gift he had been given, and so on. The ceremony ended when Kapaloma, who was representing the chief, hinted that Mapata might be allowed to wear a scarlet headband in the near future.

Village headmen represented the chief at Nkacelenga's and

[1] *Mtwa pasukulu akuwa ilamanyambi.*

[2] *Kuweya lina*—to cause the name to climb.

[3] *Tonde, tonde, mkamwini nanilila mano ngakuwela lal.* Tonde is the word for billy goat and its use here emphasizes the procreative functions of the husband in the village.

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Mapata's installation ceremonies. When an important headman succeeds, however, the chief himself usually makes a short appearance and talks to the people. When Nyenje was installed in July 1947, Kawinga attended. Nyenje has the same clan-name as Kawinga and is an Invader. In 1947, he had 109 tax-payers under him; he held rights to both initiation ceremonies, but he did not have the right to wear the scarlet headband. Kawinga arrived at 11.18 a.m. before Nyenje had come out of the hut and he went straight to it and entered. He emerged at 11.45 and sat on a chair under a drying stand. Kangomba, his head *ndewa*, came and sat with him. In the meantime the new headman was brought outside and seated on a chair. Sitting on either side of him on the mat on which his chair was placed, were his two wives. Nsanama,[1] a minor village headman of the same clan-name as Nyenje, officiated. The penny-giving now started. At 12.10 Kawinga got up and walked over to the crowd, and silenced them with a sharp whistle. They gathered round to hear his speech. He pointed out that the dispute about the succession to their headmanship had been going on for three or four years and that there had been two candidates, one of whom he had selected as successor because he knew he would be sensible and wise, and would look after his people in the village and in the smaller villages under him. He said that he had recommended this man to the District Commissioner who, with the Governor's sanction, had supported him. He did not therefore want to hear that the man had fallen ill; he dealt strictly with sorcerers. He said that respect started with the relatives: brothers and sisters, the husbands and the boys and girls must also respect 'the chief'. They must not mention his name but refer to him as 'the chief'. Kawinga went on to say that some husbands were evil and could split a village like this one, by telling lies to the headman and falsely advising the headman that his sisters were talking behind his back and insulting him. When he hears this he may break the village by ill-treating his relatives, thereby causing them to migrate and leave him all alone. Kawinga told the people not to go talking in other villages about the man who was in the chair; that sort of behaviour only led to sorcery. Finally, he warned them to help the headman in obeying the instructions of the White people who

[1] Not Kawinga's relative of the same name.

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came to the village and in accommodating strangers while he was away. He told them that disputes were to be referred to the headman immediately. Turning to the new headman he said he had to report anything unusual that occurred in the village, and that he was authorized to arbitrate in small cases in his and surrounding villages.

Kawinga then left the centre of the crowd and went back to where he had been sitting. Then an officiating headman, addressing particularly the women, said, 'Only a few months ago there was a quarrel between the present chief and his elder sisters. These women ran away to Malemia's area in Zomba district without reporting the matter to anyone. This must stop. With effect from to-day any troubles must be brought to the headman without delay: he will settle them. A tree cannot grow without branches and a headman or a chief cannot be known without his people's respect. Do not behave as children. This man cannot do things alone: he must have your help. We leave him in your hands and we do not want to hear about any more trouble. Follow all the instructions the chief has given you.' He took his leave and Nyenje was taken back inside the hut. The people now dispersed to where there was beer and dancing.

The Structural Reincarnation of Village Headmen and Perpetual Relationships

There appear to be a number of significant aspects of the installation ceremonies. First, there is the ritual death and rebirth of the village headman. The heir is 'killed' by a blow with the fist on the forehead, but is reborn the headman. The Yao do not believe that the spirit of the headman is inherited by the heir;[1] he has only eaten the name.[2] But socially he is born again and, logically consistent with this idea, he takes the wives of his predecessor without further marriage negotiation. He also takes over the property of the dead man, his clothes and his huts.

But this structural reincarnation of the headman has the important implication that the headman is immortal. He shares this characteristic with the group of which he is the leader. When

[1] As the Bemba do. A. I. Richards, 'Mother-right among the Central Bantu' in E. E. Evans-Pritchard and others, *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, Kegan Paul (London, 1933).

[2] *Kulya lina* is a synonym for succeeding to headmanship.